Docket No.

91330.095203

LIGHTING SYSTEM FOR A TROLLING BOAT

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates generally to a lighting system for illuminating the interior to a trolling boat; and more particularly, to a lighting system for illuminating the interior of a trolling boat having a light attached to a trolling motor assembly.

BACKGROUND

Trolling is a saltwater and freshwater fishing method wherein a boat is utilized to drag bait through the water in order to attract and catch fish. This method provides anglers with a means for fishing large areas of water in the least amount of time.

Trolling boats typically have a main motor, and at least one low-powered trolling motor mounted at the rear of the boat. The main motor is used to drive the boat from port to the selected fishing area, or from one fishing area to another. When the boat reaches the desired fishing area, the main motor is disengaged, and the trolling motors are used.

Placement and selection of lures is a critical factor for success in trolling.

Anglers must select the proper size, color and style of lure for each specific fish he is attempting to attract. In furtherance of this goal it is necessary that anglers be provided with adequate lighting for their selection and placement of lures. One problem that has not been addressed is the absence of an adequate lighting source for trolling boats. Since trolling is often undertaken between dusk and dawn, lighting conditions are difficult, and a convenient source of light would be of great assistance in rigging the lures. Furthermore, adequate lighting will also serve to optimize productivity and safety.

Motor boats having motors with lights attached thereto are known. One such device is the Outboard Motor/Outdrive Safety Light described in U.S. Patent Number 6,386,740. The device provides a safety light assembly designed for use with an outboard, motor or the out-drive unit of a motor mounted on a boat which is carried on a trailer being towed by a towing vehicle. The safety light assembly is removably secured to a plate on the drive housing of the motor or out-drive unit by means of clamps.

While the above mentioned device serves to improve the visibility of a motor boat being transported by a trailer, it fails to provide a source of light for the interior of a boat.

Similarly, the Boat Trailer Lighting System described in U. S. Patent 5,980,073 discloses a motor with a light attached thereto. More particularly the patent discloses a boat trailer lighting system apparatus, including a boat trailer for transporting a boat having an outboard motor mounted thereto. An electrical light assembly having an electric lamp is rotatably attached to an outboard motor

skeg mounting bracket. The electrical light assembly is connected through an electrical conductor to an electrical power source which may be connected into the tail and brake lights of the trailer so that the light is activated along with the trailer lights.

This device also serves to improve the visibility of a motorboat as it is transported by a trailer, however it does not provide a source of light that will illuminate the interior of a boat.

What is needed in the art is a lighting system that provides a source of light for the interior of a boat.

Furthermore, what is needed in the art is a lighting system for a boat that is relatively inexpensive, and does not require manual operation.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a lighting system for illuminating the interior of a trolling boat wherein a light is either fixedly attached upon, or contained within the trolling motor assembly. The invention comprises in one form thereof, a trolling motor assembly having a motor control compartment, a shaft and a motor/propeller assembly. The motor control compartment further comprises a light assembly attached thereto.

In a particular embodiment of the invention the light assembly is fixedly attached to the motor control compartment as to provide a lighting means for the interior of the boat. A further embodiment is contemplated wherein the lighting

means is contained within the motor compartment and portion of the motor compartment housing is the appropriate material to permit the passage of light through the motor compartment.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The above-mentioned and other features and advantages of this invention, and the manner of attaining them, will become appreciated and be more readily understood by reference to the following detailed description of one embodiment of the invention in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

FIG. 1 is a side view of a trolling motor assembly with light mounted upon the motor compartment.

FIG. 2 is a side view of a trolling motor assembly with light integral with the motor control compartment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Referring to the drawings, and particularly to **Fig.1**, there is shown a particular embodiment of the improved trolling motor assembly **10** of the present invention. The trolling motor assembly **10** comprises, in one form thereof, a motor

assembly **10** having a motor control compartment **11**. The motor control compartment **11** further comprises a motor control compartment top **15** and a motor control compartment bottom **16**. The motor control compartment bottom **16** is in communication with a propeller/drive unit shaft **12** extending downward from said motor control compartment **11**. Said propeller/drive unit shaft **12** further comprises a motor control compartment coupling end **19a** and a propeller/drive unit coupling end **19b** wherein said propeller/drive unit coupling end **19b** communicates with a propeller/drive unit **13**. The top side of the motor control compartment **11** further comprises a front portion **17** and a back portion **18** wherein said front portion **17** is adjacent to the interior of boat (not shown) and the back portion **18** is facing away from the boat. The motor control compartment **11** further comprises a light assembly **14** attached thereto. The light assembly **14** is attached to the front portion **17** of the motor compartment top **15,** and is positioned so as to illuminate the inner section of the boat (not shown).

Referring now to **Fig. 2**, an additional embodiment of the present invention is shown. The trolling motor assembly **20** comprises in one form thereof a motor assembly having a motor control compartment **21**. The motor control compartment **21** further comprises a motor control compartment top **25** and a motor control compartment bottom **26**. The motor control compartment bottom **26** is in communication with a propeller/drive unit shaft **12** extending downward from said motor control compartment **21**. Said propeller/drive unit shaft **12** further comprises a motor control compartment coupling end **19a** and a

propeller/drive unit coupling end **19b** wherein said propeller/drive unit coupling end **19b** communicates with a propeller/drive unit **13**. The top side of the motor control compartment **21** further comprises a front portion **27** and a back portion **28** wherein said front portion **27** is adjacent to the interior of boat (not shown) and the back portion **28** is facing away from the boat. The motor control compartment **21** further comprises a lighting means **22** contained therein. The lighting means **22** is integral with the motor control compartment **21.** Furthermore, the housing **30** of motor control compartment **21** shall have a portion that is substantially translucent **29**. The substantially translucent portion **29** of the housing **30** is positioned to allow the passage of light from the lighting means **22** to the interior of the boat (not shown). An embodiment is contemplated wherein the substantially translucent portion **29** of the housing **30** shall include a section of the front portion **27** of the motor compartment top **25** so that the lighting means **22** contained within the motor control compartment **21** will illuminate the interior of the boat.

Additionally, embodiments of the above motor compartments are contemplated to have a variety of different power sources for supplying electricity to the lights. One particular embodiment will use a standard DC battery dedicated to provide the electricity necessary to power the light. An additional embodiment is contemplated wherein the lighting means will share the power source with the drive motor.

The embodiments described are chosen to provide an illustration of principles of the invention and its practical application to enable thereby one of

ordinary skill in the art to utilize the invention in various embodiments and with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated. Therefore, the foregoing description is to be considered exemplary, rather than limiting, and the true scope of the invention is that described in the following claims.